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Vedic Religion and Caste

A. MAHADEVA SASTRI

MYSORE, 1908

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OR

IE BASIS OF UNITED HUMANITY

An introduction to the study of the Bhagavad-Gîtâ.

BY

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PREFACE.

IN sending out this pamphlet, a few words of explanation seem to be called for. In fulfilment of my promise to the President of the Arya-Dharma-Bodhini Sabha of Bangalore to give a series of discourses expounding the Bhagavadgita from Shri Shankaracharya's stand-point, I have recently given the first discourse treating, by way of introduction, of the outline of its teaching and its main purpose. It is this discourse that, with a few slight additions and alterations, appears in this form. As the main purpose of the Bhagavadgita is to give out to the world the quintessence of the Vedic Religion, otherwise known as Sanàtana Dharma, this introductory discourse may properly go forth with the title of 'Vedic Religion'. It is, however, necessary to explain the prominence I have given to 'caste,' which takes up more than a third of the length both in the title and in the body of the discourse.

I have for some months been engaged in elaborating the results of my investigation into the Vedic Law of Marriage and its later developments,—the main conclusions of this enquiry, so far as they relate to women, having been already published in a pamphlet. While tracing the connection between the high-born Hindu woman's religious disabilities and the changes in her social status, it has struck me that

her social status has a great deal been affected from time to time by changes in the social status of the Shudras. This has led me to an enquiry into the origin and development of the institution of caste, which has shown that the founders of the original institution of *Châturvarnya*, or the fourfold division of people according to their natural tendencies, did not contemplate the religious disabilities and the low status now associated with the Shudras and other non-brahman castes. It has further shown that the several changes in their status ranging from perfect equality with Brâhmanas down to the rigid caste system of the present day with the innumerable sub-divisions of people and the impassable barriers between them as well as the many invidious distinctions are traceable—as the Vedas, Itihasas, Puranas and the institutes of civil and religious law clearly show—to a gradual decline of spirituality and a corresponding ascendancy of materiality among the people as a whole. All this will be clearly shown and established in a separate work, which is now nearing completion. I have only taken this opportunity to formulate the main conclusions, since they have found corroboration in the teaching of the Bhagavadgita as set forth in this introductory lecture.

My investigation of the vexed questions of marriage and caste in the light of our scriptures has led to one important conclusion, namely, that all rules relating to social distinctions and religious disabilities are made by men attaching undue importance to the material concerns much to the detriment of their

spiritual progress. Shruti or the Shâstra proper points out to all people alike, to men and women, the upward path, on which man, as he passes up towards the highest spiritual altitude, gains a complete sway over the nether regions of matter through which he has passed and learns to use his power for the good of mankind. The scope of the *Shruti* or the Shàstra proper is distinguished from that of the *Smriti* or human law and convention as follows :—

दाराग्निहोत्रसंबन्धमृग्यजुस्सामसंहिताः ।
इज्यादिबहुलं श्रौतं धर्मं सप्तर्षयोऽब्रुवन् ॥
परंपराऽऽगतं धर्मं स्मार्तं त्वाचारलक्षणम् ।
वर्णाश्रमाचारयुतं मनुः स्वायम्भुवोऽब्रवीत् ॥

> "The seven Rishis taught the Shrauta Dharma relating to wife and sacred fire and abounding in sacrificial worship, as also the collections of the Riks, the Yajus, and the Sâmans.
>
> "The Svâyambhuva Manu (the First Man) taught the Smârta Dharma which has come down to us through ages, comprising the moral laws and the laws of *Varna* and *Ashrama*.—(*Matsya-Purana* 142, 41-42.)

The laws of spiritual progress are based on supersensuous knowledge of the Rishis. They relate to the way which leads man up to union with the Supreme Being through the sacrificial worship and all the sacred rites and duties devolving on man and woman united in holy wedlock. It is these laws which form the subject-matter of the Shruti or the Shâstra proper,

and as such they are unalterable in the light of ordinary human knowledge. On the other hand, all the rules referring to the distinctions of caste and order, to *Varna* and *Ashrama*, and varying from time to time, form the subject-matter of the Smriti and are based on ordinary human knowledge obtained through sensuous preception and ratiocination,—on the findings of man's intelligence at the time, *i.e.*, on empirical science and expediency. These vary from time to time according to the scientific and philosophical advancement of the people following the path of the Sanatana Dharma and their notions of expediency. Social reform, therefore, so far as it relates to such rules, is not opposed to the Shástra proper, provided the new measures conduce to the true moral and material advancement and are not opposed to the laws of the Sanatana-Dharma. Nay, such reforms are necessary in the case of existing institutions when these are found opposed to the findings of science or to the dictates of morality and common sense. Further, all attempts at a removal of the obstacles placed by the society in the way of those followers of the Sanatana Dharma who earnestly seek to know and follow its laws must be welcomed by the enlightened section of the community and encouraged by it in every way. Above all, I invoke the blessing of our Lord Shri Krishna upon every measure calculated to advance the cause of Universal Brotherhood and United Humanity.

28th Sept. 1908. A. M.

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VEDIC RELIGION AND CASTE *

SECTION I.

THE BHAGAVAD-GÎTA, ITS AIM AND PURPOSE.

Preamble.

THE Ârya-Dharma-Bôdhiní Sabhà has rightly attached special importance to the study of the Bhagavad-Gíta which gives an authoritative epitome of the whole Sanátana Dharma or the True Vedic Religion. It has been expounded to the members of the Sabhà by learned pandits from the Dvaita and Vishishtâdvaita standpoints, and the worthy President of the Sabhà has all along been anxious to have it expounded by a competent pandit from the Advaita standpoint also. Unfortunately, few pandits among the followers of Shrí Shankaràchàrya take to a close

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* This was originally a lecture on *Bhagavad-Gíta* and *Sanâtana Dharma* delivered on behalf of the Arya-Dharma-Bòdhiní Sabhà of Bangalore in the Hall of the Srí Chàmarájendra Sanskrit College on 6th September 1908, under the presidency of Mr. P. N. Purnaiya, B.A., President of the Sabhá. At the instance of Mr. V. P. Madhava Rao, C.I.E., Dewan of Mysore, the lecture is published in the form of this pamphlet.

study of the Vedánta, and fewer still study the Bhagavad-Gìta with due regard to the importance of its teaching. It is no wonder, therefore, that no learned pandit has yet come forward to undertake the task. Under such circumstances, my attempt to expound the Gîta from Shrì Shankarâchàrya's standpoint may seem a presumption. It would be a presumption indeed if I pose myself as a pandit addressing a body of advanced scholars. On the contrary, my exposition lays no claim to erudition, and it is one addressed by one student to other students, to a body of students who have just begun the study, and presupposing at the most an acquaintance with a mere outline of the teaching. Here I shall treat of some general points which every student ought to bear in mind in studying the Bhagavad-Gìta. This done, I may proceed with a detailed exposition of the several themes, one after another, as they occur in the book.

The Bhagavad-Gita as a Scripture.

2. Before entering on a detailed study of the Bhagavad-Gíta, the student will do well to recognise its true place in the Sacred Literature of the Hindus and to hold steadily in view the main purpose and the outline of its teaching. It forms an episode in the Mahàbhàrata, a work deservedly held in high esteem by the Hindus. In recognition of the high value of the Mahâbhârata, some of our teachers and sacred writers have designated it the fifth Veda, and there are a few who regard it as of even a higher value than what is commonly

called the Veda,* *shruti* as distinguished from *smriti*. The Mahâbhârata may well be called the Veda of the Kali-Yuga, the modern age, as it is the storehouse of a large number of episodes dealing with the problems which exercise our minds at the present day, and offering solutions which carry conviction to thinking minds. The student may well be allowed to question the prevalent idea—as most of the critical scholars of the East and the West have questioned the idea—that the Mahâbhârata is the work of one single writer; and he may even be allowed to account for its encyclopædiac character by supposing that the numerous episodes interspersed in the work have found their way into it because they have been regarded by the

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* As the following citations in the works of Shrí Madhvácharya shew :—

दशावरार्थं सर्वत्र केवलं विष्णुबोधकम् ।
वेदादपि परं चक्रे पञ्चमं वेदमुत्तमम् ॥

(The Bhârata) bearing at least ten different meanings, treating only of Vishnu, and higher than the Veda, did (Vyâsa) compose, the fifth and the highest Veda.—(*Gîtâbhâshya.*)

वेदोत्तमं तच्च विधातृशंकरप्रधानकैस्तन्मुखतः सुरैः श्रुतम् ॥

And this one (Bhârata), which is higher than the Veda was heard from his (Vyâsa's) mouth by the Devas headed by Brahmá and Shiva.—(*Bhârata-Tâtparyanirnaya.*)

भारतं सर्वशास्त्रेषु भारते गीतिका वरा ।
विष्णोः सहस्रनामापि ज्ञेयं पाठ्यं च तद्द्वयम् ॥

The Bhárata is the best of all shástras, and the Gíta is the best in the Bhárata, as also the Thousand Names of Vishnu. These two must be known and read.—(*Gîtâbhâshya.*)

compilers of those episodes, or by those who have interpolated them in the work, as means of teaching to the people some valuable truths in the name of Vyâsa, the reputed author of the Mahâbhârata. But, in whatever way the student may account for the compilation going under the name of the Mahâbhârata, taking the work as a whole in its present form, the student cannot help thinking that it embodies a mass of valuable information on various aspects of the Hindu life and throws much light on the history of many Hindu institutions. If the student of Hindu sociology would like to know what views the latest real Hindu thinkers held regarding the most pressing questions of importance,—on ethical, social, political and religious problems of life,—no better book than the Mahâbhârata can be recommended to him. The Bhagavad-Gîta is only one of the many episodes in the Mahâbhârata, and among those which are intended to inculcate high spiritual truths, it ranks as the completest, tersest, and yet clearest exposition of the Sanâtana Dharma, the Eternal Universal Religion, the Religion of Universal and Eternal Truth. As an authoritative exposition of the quintessence of the true Vedic Religion, the Bhagavad-Gîta has held a very high place among the text-books of the Sanâtana Dharma and has for a long time been regarded as a most sacred book to be taught to a student after formal initiation. As equal in authority with the Vedic texts, it has been raised to the rank of an Upanishad and commented upon by the leading exponents of the several schools of the

Vedânta Doctrine. Its teaching, indeed, in no way falls short of that of the Upanishads in importance; and in so far as its teaching has special reference to the initial stages on the path of spiritual progress and was originally addressed to a people whose social and religious condition was akin to our own at present in most respects, it may be regarded as even more important to us than the Upanishads.

The purpose of the Bhagavad-Gita.

3. The main theme of the Bhagavad-Gîta is the Sanàtana Dharma. The fundamental truths and laws of the Sanàtana Dharma are taught there by way of correcting the errors in the prevailing social and religious systems of the day. In this respect the Bhagavad-Gîta is very much like many other episodes of the Mahàbhàrata, originally intended for the solution of social, ethical and religious problems in the light of the Sanàtana Dharma, whenever the current institutions seemed to be at variance with the natural order of things, or were opposed to the dictates of conscience and the teaching of the Veda. Thus in the several episodes in the Mahàbhárata many a question have been raised and answered regarding the origin and basis of caste, the laws of marriage, the king's duties to the people, the people's duties to the king as well as their rights and privileges, the practical working-out of such moral virtues as truthfulness, charity, etc., and the righteousness or otherwise of animal sacrifices. In the Bhagavad-Gîta questions regarding the spiritual life are asked and answered: What is the best

means of attaining Moksha? Which is the straight path to Moksha, Karma or Jnàna, works or knowledge, or both combined? Should we perform the works enjoined in the Shàstras, or should we abandon them on the ground that they bind the soul to the world? How is Brahman to be worshipped, as conditioned (saguna) or as unconditioned (nirguna), with form and attributes or without them? And so on. The Bhagavad-Gîta is thus mainly concerned with the laws of spiritual progress and the shaping of man's life with a view to a speedy attainment of his highest end. Neither more nor less than this is the subject-matter of the Gîta. One would therefore be disappointed if one were to expect to find in the Gîta lessons on the best methods of political and social progress, as men in these days understand by the term 'progress,' except in so far that the laws of spiritual progress supply the conditions of man's true progress in all directions. It must be borne in mind that the Gîta represents the teaching of a Divine Personage, a God-Man, whose life-work was directed to the preservation of the decaying *spirituality* on Earth, as Bhîsma says:

यं देवं देवकी देवी वसुदेवादजीजनत् ।
भौमस्य ब्रह्मणो गुप्त्यै दीप्तमग्निमिवारणिः ॥

"That God whom Lady Devakí begat by Vasudeva for the preservation of earthly Brahman . . . ."

(*Shantiparva, 47th Adh., 29th verse.*)

Our Lord Shrì Krishna saw that He could achieve his life-work only by reiterating the truths and

laws of the Sanátana Dharma pure and simple. All references in the Gîta to the Vedic ritual and the caste distinctions and other peculiar features of the Hindu system of religion are intended mainly to remove the errors that had crept into it in the lapse of time and proved a source of positive evil, of oppression and discord. Accordingly the Bhagavad-Gíta points out how the several systems of religion are all paths of spiritual progress representing so many stages on the path and devised for the benefit of particular classes of people who have arrived at different stages, how they all should be based on the Sanâtana Dharma, the Eternal Law and Truth, how they should all converge towards the same goal and subserve one and the same end, how the several systems of the day were defective and were even monstrous variations of their true prototypes, how widely and in what respects they departed from the Sanàtana Dharma, and how each of them, reformed and followed in the spirit of the Sanàtana Dharma, would lead through the several intermediate stages to the final goal.

SECTION II.

SANÂTANA DHARMA.

First Law :—Know that the Self is eternal.

4. Let us now study the Sanàtana Dharma as taught by our Lord Shrì Krishna in the Bhagavad-Gíta,

The first law in the Sanàtana Dharma insists on the recognition of the fact that man is eternal, that the true man, the soul, that entity whose presence in the body makes it a living man and whose departure from it constitutes its death,—that this true man is independent of the body, senses and the mind, that he has existed from time without beginning, and will exist through all time, that He is eternal and immortal. Unaffected by all changes of environment, witnessing every change in the internal as well as external world and becoming the wiser for it, using his gross and subtle bodies as instruments by which to gain experience of the world around him, the true man is himself never subject to the changes of birth and death, as he is the ever-present witness of those changes,—of the whole series of changes which occur in the body, senses and the mind as well as in the world without. It is the mind, the senses, and the body that are subject to change, but not the true man who witnesses the change from within and behind all. So, the first step on the path of spiritual progress is to recognize the existence of the immortal Self in man and the imperative necessity of the realisation of that Self. Readiness to seek and find out the true Self and an intense aspiration for the realisation of that Self are two of the primary qualifications demanded of disciples by the religious teachers of all schools. Unless there exists something eternal in man capable of enjoying infinite eternal bliss, there is no *raison d'étre* for a system of spiritual ethics such

as all religions teach. Thus the first law of the Sanàtana Dharma may be expressed in the words, "Man, know thyself." Hence it is that our Lord Shrî Krishna began * his teaching with an exposition of the true and eternal Self in man,—of the truth that man is unborn and undying, distinct from the bodies which are born and perishable and which are like unto the clothing that may be put on and put off; that he is immutable, *i.e.*, unaffected by pleasure and pain, by birth and death; that the true man is all-pervading; and that, though beyond the reach of the mind and the senses, it is that true Self in man which makes all thought and sensation possible.

Second Law:—Cultivate the virtues of the soul.

5. The true nature of the Self in man being recognised, the aspirant's next step is to bring about in himself the conditions of the realisation of that Self. He is to gradually withdraw from, and rise above, the storm and tempest that rage in the internal and the external worlds with which he is associated. By constant watchfulness he will be able to see that the Self is unchangeable and remains the same amidst the changing affections of the mind and the body and amidst all variations in the environment. By this study of the Self the student realises that what is temporary and impermanent cannot be inherent in the Self who remains the same throughout the changes whereof he is the ever-present witness. This discrimination

* Bhagavad-Gíta, II, 11-30.

of the Self and the not-Self is a great deal facilitated by the cultivation of the virtues which constitute the essential basis of the Sanàtana Dharma. These virtues are mentioned in the Mahàbhàrata as follows :—

> सत्यं दमस्तपश्शौचं संतोषो ह्रीः क्षमाऽऽर्जवम् ।
> ज्ञानं शमो दया ध्यानमेष धर्मः सनातनः ॥

Satya is truthfulness, to utter nothing but truth and to give utterance only to such truths as may prove beneficent to our fellow-creatures.—*Dama* is self-control, to direct one's energies to the achievement of legitimate and righteous purposes only, to do only what is good to our fellow-creatures and to the whole mankind as well as oneself.--*Tapas* is an ardent fervour in the path of upward progress, to put forth one's whole energy to overcome obstacles in the way. This is to be accompanied by a scrupulous discharge of the duties to the society and the cultivation of the moral virtues which such a discharge implies. For, without this moral perfection, the *tapas* will develope a strong overbearing will devoid of virtue's guide, and thereby add to the already existing number of Ràkshasas and Asuras, the visible and the invisible maleficent forces in nature.—*Shaucha* is purity in thought, speech and deed, as well as the physical purity secured by pure food and drink.—*Samtosha* is contentment with what one has, absence of craving for possessions.—*Hri* is sense of shame, a studious abstention from wrong-doing.—*Kshamâ* is readiness to forgive, to resist a rising spirit of vindictiveness.

It means also patience, power of endurance, power of preserving equanimity amidst pleasure and pain.—*Ârjava* is straightforwardness, impartiality, a judicious spirit, balanced state of mind, not being inclined to the one side or the other.—*Jnâna* is knowledge of spiritual truths taught in the scriptures, including a true conception of the universe, of man and his relations to the universe and the Supreme Being.—*Shama* is a balanced and undisturbed state of mind, variously known as peace, tranquillity, serenity, and so on.—*Dayâ* is compassion for all beings and readiness to do good to them and to alleviate their sufferings.—*Dhyâna* is power of concentrating the mind and directing it to the meditation and contemplation of spiritual truths, so as to realise fully those truths which have been known before only through the scriptures, by lifting oneself above the distractions of the mind and fixing oneself on the level of the truths to be realised. *Dhyâna* is the only means of realising the supersensuous truths taught in the scriptures. These moral and intellectual attributes, powers and faculties are termed 'the virtues of the soul'—*Âtmagunas* *—

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* Gautama in the Dharmasútra says :—

"अथाष्टावात्मगुणाः—[1]दया सर्वभूतेषु [2]क्षान्ति [3]रनसूया [4]शौच [5]मनायासो [6]मङ्गल [7]मकार्पण्य [8]मस्पृहा । यस्यैते चत्वारिंशत्संस्कारा न चाष्टावात्मगुणा न स ब्रह्मणः सायुज्यं सालोक्यं च गच्छति । यस्य तु खलु चत्वारिंशत्संस्काराणामेकदेशोऽप्यष्टावात्मगुणा अथ स ब्रह्मणः सायुज्यं सालोक्यं च गच्छति ॥

"Now (follow) the eight good qualities of the soul, *viz.*, compassion on all creatures, forbearance, freedom from anger,

because they form valuable permanent possession of the *Soul*, not perishing with the physical body and the sense-organs like the powers acquired by physical and psychical gymnastics. Without these virtues, Vedic culture is not possible and bears no fruit. It is these virtues which lighten the soul's earthly burden and lift the soul to heaven. Without them, our Shàstras * say, no man can attain communion with the Lord though he may have gone through the whole course of the Vedic ritual. On the contrary, when these virtues have been developed in full, man can attain unity with the Lord even by the shortest course of Vedic ritual. In brief, the Sanâtana Dharma demands the conservation of all the energies possessed by man for use in a perfect performance of the duties enjoined on the aspirant by the Shâstras and the spiritual master (Guru). The forces thus conserved are to be applied to the promotion of the well-being of our fellow-creatures ; the aspirant should be actively benevolent as well as compassionate to his fellow-men and to the creatures below man. Then man will be at peace in himself, at peace with his fellow-men, at peace with the creatures below man.

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purity, quietism, auspiciousness, freedom from avarice, and freedom from covetousness. He who is sanctified by these forty sacraments, but whose soul is destitute of the eight good qualities, will not be united with Brahman, nor does he reach his heaven. But he, forsooth, who is sanctified by a few only of these forty sacraments, and whose soul is endowed with the eight excellent qualities, will be united with Brahman, and will dwell in his heaven."—*VIII*, *22–25*.

* *Vide* note on p. 11.

The virtues of the soul make a Brahmana.

6. Our scriptures * enjoin the acquisition and development of the virtues mentioned above as incumbent on all people following the path of the Sanàtana Dharma, to whatever caste or class they may belong; and they are also the virtues which, according to our Lord Shrí Krishna, are inherent in the true Brâhmana and go to make a Brâhmana, as taught in the Gita:

> शमो दमस्तपः शौचं क्षान्तिरार्जवमेव च ।
> ज्ञानं विज्ञानमास्तिक्यं ब्रह्मकर्म स्वभावजम् ॥
>
> "Serenity, self-restraint, austerity, purity, forgiveness and also uprightness, knowledge, wisdom, faith,—these are the acts of the Brâhmanas, born of their nature."
>
> (*xviii*, 42.)

Any man, therefore, who has developed these virtues in him by studious culture is a Brâhmana, though

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* क्षमा सत्यं दमः शौचं दानमिन्द्रियसंयमः ।
आहिंसा गुरुशुश्रूषा तीर्थानुसरणं दया ॥
आर्जवं लोभशून्यत्वं देवब्राह्मणपूजनम् ।
अनभ्यसूया च तथा धर्मः सामान्य उच्यते ॥
(*Vishnu-Smriti ii.* 16-17.)

आनृशंस्यमहिंसा चाप्रमादः संविभागिता ।
श्राद्धकर्मातिथेयं च सत्यमक्रोध एव च ॥
स्वेषु दारेषु संतोषः शौचं नित्यानसूयता ।
आत्मज्ञानं तितिक्षा च धर्माः साधारणा नृप ॥
(*Shântiparva*, 296*th Adh.*, 23*rd*-24*th verses.*)

धृतिः क्षमा दमोऽस्तेयं शौचमिन्द्रियनिग्रहः ।
धीर्विद्या सत्यमक्रोधो दशकं धर्मलक्षणम् ॥—(*Manu*, *vi.* 92.)

convention may assign him to a lower caste, or place him beyond the pale of all castes. And contrariwise, no man who is reputed to be a Brâhmana, but in whom the virtues of the soul do not exist in a marked degree, has any more title to the name Brâhmana and to all that is implied in the name than one of a lower caste who has yet to acquire those virtues. In this sense also we are to understand the term Brâhmana when it is said in the shâstras that the path of wisdom is open only to a Brâhmana and that he alone can attain liberation from the bond of human birth without again returning to the earth. In a secondary sense, all the followers of the Sanàtana Dharma, *i.e.*, all those who are bound to acquire the virtues of the soul and are engaged in the cultivation of these virtues, may be called Brahmanas; and in this sense the name was once applied, as I shall shew later on, to all Aryans before they became divided into the four classes, such as, Brahmanas, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas and Shûdras, named after the worldly functions assigned to them respectively according to their inherent natural tendencies and capacities.

Brahmavidya is open to all earnest seekers.

7. As the virtues of the soul mentioned above are recommended to all classes of people by our shàstras, it follows that by studious cultivation of these virtues even a person who is not born in a Bràhmana family, not born of parents who have been marked by a high development of these virtues,—who may have been

born in a Kshatriya, Vaishya or Shûdra family,—to whatever sex the person may belong, even such a person may attain to the status of a Bràhmana and tread the path of wisdom, which is now, according to the existing rules, closed to all but the highest-born men. In this connection be it remembered that the virtues of the soul which all the followers of the Sanàtana Dharma should cultivate include *Jnána*, *Dhyâna*, and *Vijnâna*—*i.e.*, a theoretical knowledge of spiritual truths acquired through the Veda which is the primary source of that knowledge, a capacity to meditate intensely on those truths, and to realise those truths known before only through the scriptures. Does not this mean that Brahma-Vidyà is open to all people who earnestly follow the teaching of the Sanàtana Dharma and equip themselves with the necessary virtues by culture and development? There, reason and the shàstras agree; convention alone may stand in the way.

Faith in the Law is necessary.

8. We have to take note of one important and necessary condition of all success in the path of spiritual progress, mentioned by our Lord Shrí Krishna as one of the inherent virtues of a true Bràhmana,—namely, *âstikya*, a firm faith in the law of spiritual progress as taught by the scriptures and the spiritual master. No man can rise above the necessity for revelation, as man's progress proceeds from the known to the unknown. No progress towards a higher stage is possible without the means being revealed by one who

has already reached it or crossed beyond it. This revelation may come to us through the holy scriptures which record the teachings of the illumined sages of the past, or through the mouth of a living master whose words carry conviction with them, or even through an inward inspiration proceeding from the true Self within. The nature of the truth itself will inspire faith in the hearer if he has really grasped the truth, and spur him on to action. A firm faith in the spiritual truths taught in the scriptures is not possible without a free access to the knowledge of those truths and a capacity to meditate on them. Such a faith which the inherent truth of the Law inspires and which enables the devotee to surmount all difficulties in the upward progress is a *sine qua non* for all aspirants of spiritual wisdom. Blessed is the man who, having known the laws of the Sanàtana Dharma in any one of the ways, is convinced of their truth and realises their imperativeness and begins to shape his life according to them.

Third Law :—Attune thyself to the Divine Law.

9. It has been seen that the virtues of the soul include some of the social and moral virtues which will secure peace with all the beings on earth with whom man has to come in contact. By a scrupulous discharge of the social duties, by kindness and compassion, by charity and benevolence, we will be at peace with our fellow-men and lower animals. But this is not all the Sanàtana Dharma demands of its followers. They have to be at peace not only with the visible creatures

such as man and lower animals on earth, but also with the many invisible entities above and below man that have anything to do with the humanity. The scriptures tell us that the world is governed by one Almighty Lord and that His agents carry on the world-processes according to His will and the Laws He has laid down for their guidance, all tending to the best interests of man and the whole creation. These agents,—Devas, Rishis, Pitris, as they are called in the Shâstras—have worked for man for long ages; and therefore without discharging the debt due to them, man cannot attain liberation from the bond of humanity. The fine human organisation with its mental and physical faculties and its environments, and the sacred knowledge embodied in our scriptures, are part of the work done by these Divine agents for man; so that the debts we owe to them are best discharged by using our knowledge and faculties and all our environment for the purposes which these agents have in view, namely, the physical, intellectual, moral, and spiritual progress of the humanity and the whole sentient existence. That is to say, if a man seeks liberation from the bondage of earth-life, he should use all his capacities for the progress of his fellow-creatures as a servant of the Supreme Lord of the Universe, without seeking to secure personal benefits. He should identify himself with the Divine administration and co-operate with the Divine agency in carrying on the world-processes that he may be at peace with these Divine Intelligences, just as he

attains peace with his fellow-men on earth by co-operating with the ruler and his government and obeying his laws. Thereby man grows to be at one in purpose with God and rises above the limitations of humanity; he attains atonement with God, which he cannot do so long as he works for personal ends. This is what our Lord means when He says:

स्वेस्वे कर्मण्यभिरतः संसिद्धिं लभते नरः ।
स्वकर्मनिरतः सिद्धिं यथा विन्दति तच्छृणु ॥
यतः प्रवृत्तिर्भूतानां येन सर्वमिदं ततम् ।
स्वकर्मणा तमभ्यर्च्य सिद्धिं विन्दति मानवः ॥

* * *

असक्तबुद्धिः सर्वत्र जितात्मा विगतस्पृहः ।
नैष्कर्म्यसिद्धिं परमां संन्यासेनाधिगच्छति ॥

> "Devoted each in his own work, man attains perfection; how one, devoted in one's work attains success, that do thou hear.
>
> "Him from whom proceeds the activity of all beings, by whom all this is evolved, by worshipping Him with his proper work, man attains perfection.
>
> * * *
>
> "He whose reason is not attached anywhere, whose self is subdued, from whom desires have fled, he by renunciation attains the supreme state of freedom from work."
>
> (*Bhagavad-Gîta, xviii.* 45-46, 49.)

When man uses his capacities unselfishly in the way recommended in the scriptures, doing every act as an

agent in the hand of the Supreme Lord, as His obedient servant, then, however defective his actions at first may be and however imperfectly performed, he will soon attain perfection in them and rise above the limitations which at present bound his powers as man within the limits of his earthly tabernacle. When man has thus been at peace with the whole creation by loyalty to the Divine Law as well as to human and moral laws, then he may renounce his outward duties; then no personal concerns impel him to external action; then he is competent to tread the path of wisdom, *Jnâna-nishthâ*, leading him to the realisation of his inherent unity with the Supreme Lord and his own as well as the Lord's inherent nature of untarnished bliss, infinite wisdom, and eternal being.

Fourth Law:—Love the Lord and trust in Him.

10. The path of wisdom is open to all men who have fulfilled the conditions; and no man who has recognised his title to a better and higher destiny than his present lot should neglect a single opportunity for uplifting himself. No doubt the task is a long and arduous one and cannot be performed in a day. But each man has to do it himself and must do it some day or other. Others cannot do it for him though there are Great Ones who can help him in doing it; but he has to strive hard and work unselfishly and long before he can secure their help. By unselfish work, man will be able to secure the help of the Supreme Lord Himself, which will be of infinite

avail to him in the path of spiritual perfection. To a man who works earnestly and unselfishly, with an intense love of the Lord and His work, with a complete trust in Him and in a spirit of self-surrender to Him, every thing will prove a source of help. The very tribulations he will be put to when he is working in the path of progress with a complete trust in the Lord will only serve to purify him of the dross that has gathered in his framework and allow the Divine influence to work all the better in him. This complete self-surrender to the will of the Supreme Lord who dwells in the heart of all beings is the first and the last resort of the devotee on the path of wisdom, the safest guide and the most potent helper in the pilgrimage of the soul, available to the weak as well as to the strong. Acting with this trust in the Lord which an ardent love for Him and His work alone can inspire, the devotee will surely cross beyond all sins and surmount all obstacles. With the grace of the Lord shown at every step in the long journey, the devotee will reach the goal of Supreme Bliss, where he will abide for ever in the everlasting Divine glory and in the splendour of his true being. So, the Lord says:

ईश्वरः सर्वभूतानां हृद्देशेऽर्जुन तिष्ठति ।
भ्रामयन् सर्वभूतानि यन्त्रारूढानि मायया ॥
तमेव शरणं गच्छ सर्वभावेन भारत ।
तत्प्रसादात्परां शान्तिं स्थानं प्राप्स्यसि शाश्वतम् ॥

" The Lord dwells in the heart of all beings,

O Arjuna, whirling by màyà all beings (as if) mounted on a machine.

"Fly unto Him for refuge, with all thy obtain being, O Bharata; by His grace shalt thou supreme peace and the eternal resting place."

(*Gíta xviii.* 61, 62)

Fifth Law:—Perfect the Love by Divine Wisdom.

11. Let us now study the path of wisdom culminating in Divine Love, as described by our Lord Shrî Krishna (xviii, 51—55). The path of wisdom is the path of yoga, and is marked with a complete renunciation of all personal worldly concerns. When the mind is completely divorced from the concerns of external life, then it is able to apprehend the true nature of the Self as described in the Veda. The devotee will then be able to completely restrain the outgoing tendencies of the mind, senses, and the body, as he no longer seeks the objects of sense, no longer regards with love or hatred those objects which come to him unsought. Resorting to a sequestered spot, taking a very light food, restraining the body, speech, and thought from external activity, meditating upon the truths taught to him by the Teacher and the Shàstra, studiously maintaining an attitude of indifference towards the objects of enjoyment, of earth and heaven, having set aside all pride of self, all strong personal attachments, all haughtiness, all forms of lust and anger, possessions of all kinds, claiming nothing as his,—the devotee remains calm,

with no wall of separation between him and the Lord. in whom he has been seeking to merge himself, When the devotee has attained firm footing on this ground, with the mind completely calm and serene, incapable of longing for new acquisitions or of grieving for any losses he may sustain, treating all alike, regarding all beings like himself, embracing in his ever-expanding love all men and all beings above and below man, then he rises to the completest and highest devotion to the Supreme. His communion with the Lord is constant and perfect. His love of the Lord and the whole creation is as complete as his love for himself : nay his love for himself is completely merged in his love of the Lord and His works. With no veil of partition between himself and the Lord, his communion with the Lord enables the devotee to realise the Supreme in all His glory and splendour. Then the devotee enters into the very being of the Supreme Lord, his individuality merged in that of the Lord.

Sanatana Dharma in brief.

12. Now to sum up. The Sanàtana Dharma teaches thus : O man, know that thy true Self is eternal and blissful, untarnished with pain. Regarding thus thy true Self, and working up from this idea of thy Self, try and rise to a conception of the Supreme Lord of the universe in whom the whole world including thyself has its being, who abides in thy heart as well as in the heart of all beings, who works in and for the benefit of the whole universe as man

works in the body and with it for his personal benefit. With the firm belief in the teaching of the scripture that man is destined to rise one day to the level of his Divine source and transcend all limitations of the humanity, O man, work thy way up gradually by widening thy interests, by extending the sphere of thy love in all directions till it embraces within it all mankind and the whole animal creation, till thou art able to make thy love coextensive with that of the Supreme Lord of the Universe. This upward progress is assured if thou, O man, instead of trusting to thy own strength and resources, invokest the Supreme Lord to work in thee and regardest thyself a mere instrument in His hands, ever trying on thy part to prove thyself a worthy instrument for Divine Service.

SECTION III.

RELIGIOUS REFORM.

Incarnation of *Shri* Krishna to re-affirm the *Sanatana* Dharma.

13. This is the Sanâtana Dharma which our Lord Shrí Krishna has taught as the sum and substance of the whole Vedic teaching. This eternal law is based on eternal truth which does not vary with time and place. All systems of religion are adaptations of this eternal law, suited to the peculiar circumstances of

the people to whom they are addressed. Any limitations or shortcomings which may be found in these systems are due to the ignorance of the true scope of the Eternal Law. When limitations and shortcomings in any system of religion tend to positive mischief and thwart the main purpose of religion, then the Divine Being or one of His messengers is sure to appear on the scene to set the matters right. Such a manifestation was the incarnation of the Divine being as Shrì Krishna, called forth by the growing necessity for an authoritative declaration of the truths of the Sanàtana Dharma to the people of the Aryavarta who at the time pursued different paths for the attainment of perfection, all at variance with the teaching of the Sanâtana Dharma in essential points.

Reforms in the Religious systems.

14. The protest of our Lord Shrî Krishna against the abuses in the religious systems of His day may be read in every section of the Bhagavad-Gita. Such abuses occur and recur in the history of every religion, and more so in the religions of India whose civilization has always been marked by the paramount attention paid to the spiritual as distinguished from the purely material interests of the people. And many of the same abuses that marked the religious systems of Shrì Krishna's day are perceptible in the practical and theoretical Hinduism of the present day. A close study, therefore, of the errors pointed out by our Lord in the religious systems of His day and of the reforms

suggested in the light of the Sanátana Dharma will be quite as instructive now as it then was.

Works and Renunciation of Works.

15. The first and foremost reform suggested by our Lord relates to the life of renunciation. It would seem that people in those days thought, as the majority of the Hindus to-day do think, that the highest spiritual life was the life of renunciation, a life of complete physical inactivity; and with this notion, people then, as now, suddenly abandoned their social duties in moments of disappointment when they became depressed under the stress of some untoward circumstance in their worldly life. Thus Arjuna, in a moment of weak despondency at the impending inevitable heavy loss of life in the forthcoming battle, proposed to give up the warrior's career and to assume the life of an ascetic. Our Lord Shrî Krishna, as Arjuna's friend, counsel and guide. protested against this unwise and ill-considered resolve. Arjuna was, by nature, a warrior with storng active tendencies which had been duly fostered, developed and cultivated to a high degree of perfection. It might have been easy enough to nip them while yet in the bud; but highly developed as they had been, they could not be curbed at that stage and must only be exhausted by being employed for legitimate purposes. Moreover, a life of activity, such as Arjuna was trained to lead, was not in itself evil, as it would be a potent factor in the spiritual development of the individual if used for

unselfish purposes. Further, it should be recognised by all aiming at spiritual progress—as all Hindus profess to do, aspiring to rise above human limitations—that they should give up the idea of working, or of ceasing to work, out of purely personal considerations, that their powers should be placed at the disposal of the Supreme Lord, that they should devote to His service all the faculties and capacities acquired in the course of evolution under the fostering care of the Divine agents. These agents have laboured for long long ages, at great sacrifice, to bring men up to the high degree of development such as people like Arjuna have reached, and therefore the lives of such people are not their own, as people erroneously suppose; but they are God's and must be used for Divine purposes. On utilitarian and moral grounds also the Lord has pointed out that a life of complete outward inactivity is not desirable and cannot be recommended in the case of most men, even though it might be thought possible. The Lord has said that the life of true renunciation, insisted on in the case of a seeker of spiritual progress, can be led by a wise and strong-willed man working actively amidst the storm and stress of worldly life. Supposing that a life of complete inactivity were possible for people like Arjuna, the Lord argued, that if such leaders of men were to resort to it, it would be setting a bad example to the masses, as these would then regard the life of inactivity as the best one under all circumstances. Such a notion is prejudicial to the progress of the

humanity and is in contravention to the Divine and natural order of things, as our Lord says:

> न कर्मणामनारम्भान्नैष्कर्म्यं पुरुषोऽश्नुते ।
> न च संन्यसनादेव सिद्धिं समधिगच्छति ॥

> "Not by abstaining from works does a man reach the actionless state; nor by merely renouncing (works) does he attain perfection."
>
> (*Gîtâ, iii. 4.*)

We are told that even the so-called inactive life of the Sages is really full of activity. It is said that their activity lies in a wider sphere, that it is world-wide, stimulated by their ever expanding love for mankind and the whole creation of God whom they love as their very Self. Their invisible activity is of far-reaching beneficial consequences and far more fruitful than the most active life they might lead in the society of men. It is also said that to this life of higher activity any man may rise; but he can rise only by doing the utmost unselfish service to the humanity that he is now capable of, as it will equip him with the wisdom and power of experience necessary for the higher service.

The Pravritti-marga.

16. In this connection mark the words in which the Lord has warned leaders of society against the dangerous example they might set to the ignorant masses by inconsiderately giving up the life of outward activity, temporal and spiritual. On Lord says:

न बुद्धिभेदं जनयेदज्ञानां कर्मसङ्गिनाम् ।
जोषयेत् सर्वकर्माणि विद्वान् युक्तः समाचरन् ॥

"Let no wise man cause unsettlement in the minds of the ignorant who are attached to works; he should make them do all works, himself doing them with devotion."

(*Gîtâ*, *iii. 26*)

Thus, on leaders of society devolves the responsibility of shewing to the ignorant masses, by both precept and example, that a life of action is the most efficacious means of securing worldly success and spiritual progress. Without treading the path of works, the *Pravritti-Mârga*, it is not possible to pass on to the path of renunciation, the *Nivritti-Mârga*. When the works enjoined in the shâstras have been duly discharged and moral virtues have been developed to a certain degree of perfection, then in the fulness of time comes the moment when the aspirant may safely abandon the life of outward activity No violent and sudden effort should be made to snatch oneself away from one's legitimate sphere of worldly activity. For the growth of an infant soul just climbing the lowest rungs of the ladder that rises from the life of sensualism of animal man and reaches to the loftiest region of pure spiritual life of the Divinity, it is necessary to have tasted all, or some at least of, the pleasures that earth and heaven can offer before the soul can detach itself from all longing for those pleasures. This infant stage of the soul's progress is marked by the strong imperious desire for the

pleasures of earth and heaven and an incapacity to conceive the higher spiritual bliss divorced from the sensual enjoyments such as are said in some of the scriptures to be available in heaven after death. All that need be done in such a case is to point out the path of righteous activity by which such subtle pleasures of earth and heaven can be secured. The course of action pursued with this end in view constitutes the Pravritti-màrga, conducing to worldly happiness—in the larger sense of the term,—*i.e.*, tending to happiness in the earthly life and in the life in heaven after death. Such is the happiness sought after by the ordinary run of humanity whose conceptions of heaven are very material. They imagine heaven as a celestial region of golden cities, gardens and mansions, filled with damsels of celestial beauty and other accessories to sensual enjoyment, which await the souls on the close of their earthly life of righteousness. The civil and moral laws such as are laid down in the Shàstras for the guidance of the Aryans offer the best conditions under which earthly happiness can be secured, while by following the course of prayer and sacrificial worship such as is described in the Veda, man can secure happiness in heaven. Such is the path marked out in our scriptures for the growth of the humanity in the early stages of their spiritual progress.

The Nivritti-Marga.

17. The soul, after repeated experiences of the pleasures of earth and heaven, becomes cloyed with

the enjoyments and turns away from them. What then is man to do? He should not renounce the life of activity at once. The life of external activity may cease only when man is capable of the more intense inward activity implied in the path of wisdom proper, *Jnána-nishthâ*, the path of knowledge (and renunciation of works). Until and unless he has gained a glimpse of the true nature of the Self in man, altogether free from the trammels of the bodies, he should not renounce works. He should continue the same life of righteous outward activity as he has hitherto led, doing the prescribed works not for any personal purposes of his, but for the good of others and the whole mankind, as a servant of the Supreme Lord. By this kind of active life, by this gradual process of detachment from the fruits of the works he does, man in due course gains a glimpse into the true nature of the Self within as detached from the body. This process is known as *Karma-yóga*, the doing of works unselfishly in order to obtain liberation from the bonds forged by the selfish action of long ages. When this life of unselfish activity has been led long enough, man completely realises the true Self that is Divine as distinguished from the personal self bounded by the limits of the body. When the divorce of the soul from external concerns has been complete, then the external activities drop off from the man, without his effort to abandon them. He may engage in them only when he chooses, of his own deliberate will. His will is no longer a slave of his desires. If

he again engages in any work, it is not to serve any purpose of his own, temporal or spiritual; it is a self-imposed task gladly undertaken for the fulfilment of some Divine mission. But he is free to renounce the work any time he may choose. This is the fulfilment of Karma-yóga; thus does the Karma-yóga lead to Karma-Sannyâsa; thus by doing works without regard to personal self, man will be able to renounce works altogether in the end. The same course of action which when pursued with a desire for its fruit constitutes the Pravritti-Mârga, is transformed into Karma-yôga, the first step on the path of Nivritti (Renunciation), when pursued with no personal interest in the fruits of action, when every act is done as an offering at the altar of the Divine Service, when all faculties and capacities are applied to the carrying on of the Divine command as found in the Divine word of the Veda.

Misconceptions corrected in the path of Vedic Karma.

18. Whether regarded as the *Pravritti-màrga* or as the first step on the path of *Nivritti*, the path of Karma as followed at the time of our Lord Shrî Krishna betrayed some serious defects. It seems to have been held that the elaborate system of ritual which consisted in the offering of oblations and chanting of hymns, accompanied with all the paraphernalia of the sacrificial rituals witnessed in these days, was the sole means of securing heavenly bliss, and that there was nothing else that man might aspire for, beyond the sensual enjoyment of heavenly

pleasure.* Thus the followers of the path of Vedic Karma shut their eyes to the higher goal of pure spirituality and spent their whole life in the pursuit of the lower ideal. The system of philosophy constructed in support of this view has ignored the existence of the Supreme Lord of the Universe and of His agents governing the affairs of the worlds. It has been asserted that when an act is done the result must follow inevitably, and that therefore the Veda does not mean to teach that there exists a Supreme Lord whose agents carry on the world-process, and who, taking cognisance of the acts done by man, dispenses fruits according to the merit of the acts performed. They have even gone to the length of denying that the *Mantras* have any meaning to convey, or that they are prayers addressed to higher Intelligences called Devas. They have held that the value of chanting mantras consists merely in the wholesome changes produced in our environment by the utterance of the sounds with prescribed accent and intonation. The path of Karma thus understood cannot effectively serve its purpose, whether regarded as a means of securing heavenly bliss or as a step on the path of renunciation. At any rate, it will not do as a step on the path of renunciation. For, the devotee on this path should distinctly see that in working as directed in the Veda he is only carrying out the command of the Supreme Lord as His servant. He should further be conscious of the fact that there are servants of

* *Vide* Gíta, ii. 42-44.

loftier grades, hierarchies of Devas charged with the executive administration of the universe, helping the evolution of man and the whole sentient existence in accordance with the will of the Supreme Lord. This consciousness is to form the basis of the idea that by doing unselfishly the works enjoined in the Veda, for the general good of the humanity and the whole creation, he repays the debt due to the Devas, Rishis and Pitris, who have made the devotee what he is. Therein man finds an incentive to a complete dedication of all his capacities and powers to the service of God; and by the cheerful work he thus renders he becomes capable of further and even more useful work for the good of the humanity. The ignoring of the Divine agency is therefore a serious omission and a grave defect in the Karma-Yoga, the path of works regarded as the first step on the path of *nivritti*. And our Lord has taught * that even in the case of him who works for his own personal benefit, devotion to the Supreme Lord increases the efficiency. The shâstras teach clearly that an act of ritual should be performed with a full understanding of the meaning of the whole ceremonial and of the mantras chanted, that the worshipper should intensely cherish the same ideas that were present in the mind of the original utterer of the mantras, and that he should clearly and steadily hold in his mind the forms and attributes of the Devas to be worshipped. Such an act of worship, it is said, is more efficacious than the same act—a mere

* *Vide* Gíta, vii, 16-23.

external ritual—done without such an understanding on the part of the worshipper. Our Lord teaches that it is the Devas who minister to our wants when appealed to through Yajnas;* but it teaches also that those who worship the Supreme Lord as best they can, will realise their aspirations, whatever they may be, more easily than if they seek them only through the Devas who are His agents. Therefore even when the sacrificial worship is addressed to these Devas, as is done in many of the Vedic sacrifices, the devotee should recognise and bear in mind that these Devas are all agents or aspects of the one Supreme Lord, and that it is the Supreme Lord who ought to be prayed to and worshipped in and through these forms.† This conscious recognition of the one Supreme Lord and an intense devotion to Him will render more efficacious the Karma-mârga, the path of works, whether pursued with a view to the personal enjoyment of the fruits of action or as a disinterested observance of Vedic injunctions with a view to be released from the binding power of the actions already done. Devotion to the Lord is the most efficient factor in the Karma-mârga, and it is said that, however defective and ineffectual the devotee's action may be by itself, the single-minded devotion to the Supreme Lord will make up for the deficiency. Nay, the external ritual may even be dispensed with altogether if the devotee can, without the aid of any outward ritual, fix his mind on the Lord

* *Vide* Gíta, iii, 10-12. † *Vide* Gìta, ix, 20-27.

with intense love and ardent devotion; for, it is to attain this Divine love and knowledge that all outward ritual is prescribed. So our Lord says:

> श्रेयान् द्रव्यमयाद्यज्ञात् ज्ञानयज्ञः परन्तप ।
> सर्वं कर्माखिलं पार्थ ज्ञाने परिसमाप्यते ॥
>
> "Better than sacrifice with objects is sacrifice by wisdom, O Parantapa. All work whatsoever, O Pàrtha, in wisdom finds its consummation."
>
> (*Gita, iv, 33.*)
>
> सर्वधर्मान् परित्यज्य मामेकं शरणं व्रज ।
> अहं त्वा सर्वपापेभ्यो मोक्षयिष्यामि मा शुचः ॥
>
> "All paths abandoning, to Me alone do thou come for refuge. I will deliver thee from all sins. Grieve not."
>
> (*Gita, xviii, 66.*)

Misconceptions in the Sankhya and Yoga systems.

19. We have seen that, by Karma-yôga, the mind is purified and the devotee gains a glimpse of the true nature of the Self independent of the body and mind. When this consummation has been attained, the devotee on the path of Nivritti (renunciation) is fit to enter on the path of Yoga proper,—of Dhyâna-yóga or Jnâna-yôga as the case may be,—whereby to fully realise the true nature of the Self and hold on to it firmly. Dhyâna-yóga and Jnâna-yóga are only two aspects of one and same thing, namely, Yòga, or the means of realising man's unity with the Divine Being. In the one the devotee tries by intense concentration and meditation to realise the unity as taught in the

shàstras, while in the other he studies the subject as taught in the shàstras, and by a gradual elimination of all that is alien to the Self and the Divine Being raises the mind to that level of conception where it can grasp the unity of the Self in man and the Self in the whole universe. The two paths are not altogether distinct. In both the devotee has to study and to meditate; but in the one meditation is predominant, while in the other study and investigation aided by intuition form the prominent factors. People in the days of our Lord, very much like the people of these days, rushed to the path of the Yòga proper without having passed through the necessary antecedent process of purification implied in the Karma-yòga. Under the influence of the Sànkhya system,—of the historical school of Sànkhya now going under the name of Kapila, as distinguished from the true Sànkhya which is identical with the Sanâtana Dharma and the Vedànta,—the idea has gained ground that all outward action is pernicious, as *râjasic* and *tâmasic*, *i.e.*, as having largely to do with the outgoing tendencies of the mind and the body and arising from an ignorance of the true nature of the objects of sense and a longing desire to obtain them. The path of Karma recommended in the Veda includes sacrificial rituals which the Sànkhyas have condemned as unholy because they involve cruelty to animals and animal slaughter. These animal sacrifices, however much they have been defended by the advocates of the Shrauta rituals in their present form, have indeed

proved revolting to those who cherish tender feelings for the animal creation. The Itihâsas and Purânas,* the traditional record of our archaic history, tell us that the Maharshis, those mighty Sages who were and are the guardians of the Sanâtana Dharma, protested hard against the animal sacrifice when it was first introduced into the ancient system of sacrificial ritual. The Rishis hold that such an act of cruelty is opposed to the teaching of the Sanâtana Dharma, and that the followers of the Sanàtana Dharma ought to avoid such acts of cruelty and to eliminate from the Vedic ritual all elements of cruelty. Not knowing that the path of Vedic Karma could be pursued without resorting to animal slaughter, the Sànkhyas have abandoned the path of Karma and rushed to the path of Yôga much too early, to the great detriment of their spiritual enlightenment which they have so intensely sought. Our Lord protested † against this course which prevailed in His time. He has taught that no man should give up Karma-yóga till he has become a Yogàrûdha, *i.e.*, till, by a long course of unselfish action, his mind has become detached from the objects of sense, till he can do actions without attachment, till he has given up all personal desires and ambitions. So the Lord says:

यदा हि नेन्द्रियार्थेषु न कर्मस्वनुषज्जते ।
सर्वसंकल्पसंन्यासी योगारूढस्तदोच्यते ॥

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* *Vide* Mahâbhàrata, Shântiparva, Adhyâyas 336-337; Vâyu Puràna, Adhyàya 57; and Matsya-Puràna, Adhyàya 143.

† Gità, v., 2, 6; vi., 1-3; xviii., 5, 6.

When, forsooth, in the objects of sense and works he is not attached, abandoning all concerns, then he is said to be a Yogàrùdha."

(*Gîta, vi, 4.*)

Misconceptions of the Theistic and Atheistic Sankhyas.

20. The object of Yoga—whether Dhyàna-yoga, the Yoga of meditation, or Jnàna-yoga, the Yoga of knowledge and investigation—is the realisation of the true nature of the one Self. By Yoga, as our Lord says, man realises that his Self is one with the Divine Lord, that his Self is in all beings and all beings are in his Self, that the Yogin views all alike, seeing himself as inseparate from all. He says:

सर्वभूतस्थमात्मानं सर्वभूतानि चात्मनि ।
ईक्षते योगयुक्तात्मा सर्वत्र समदर्शनः ॥
यो मां पश्यति सर्वत्र सर्वं च मयि पश्यति ।
तस्याहं न प्रणश्यामि स च मे न प्रणश्यति ॥
सर्वभूतस्थितं यो मां भजत्येकत्वमास्थितः ।
सर्वथा वर्तमानोऽपि स योगी मयि वर्तते ॥

"The Self abiding in all beings, and all beings (abiding) in the Self, sees he whose self has been steadied by Yoga, who everywhere sees the same.

"He who sees Me everywhere and sees everything in Me, to him I vanish not, nor to Me does he vanish.

"Whoso, intent on unity, realises Me who abide in all beings, that yogin dwells in Me, whatever his mode of life."—(*Gitâ, vi, 29-30.*)

Thus stating the end of Dhyâna-yoga, our Lord protests against another distinguishing feature of the historical Sânkhya system. The Sànkhya recommends the meditation of the Self as distinct from matter and from other Selfs. But the Sanâtana Dharma teaches that the devotee should meditate on the Self as one with the Supreme Lord in whom all existence abides and has its being. Some of the Sànkhyas—known as *seshvara* or theistic Sànkhyas—no doubt recommend the contemplation of a lofty personage like Vyâsa, or of Ishvara, an external Omniscient Deity; but they regard in meditation these beings as distinct from the Self, and hold that a person's salvation consists in his Self being finally detached from matter and entirely oblivious of the other Selfs that really exist in the universe. According to the Sanàtana Dharma, the aim of the devotee should be to consciously attain to a state of unity with the Supreme Lord who is the source of all beings in the universe, and in whom all beings abide, with whom all the seemingly detached souls ultimately become one. So that, on whatever line the devotee may be working, whether it be on the path of Karma, or on the path of Dhyàna, or on the path of Jnàna, he should always hold communion with the Supreme Lord of the universe, the source and stay of all animate and inanimate existence. He should grow in consciousness into the likeness of the Lord, loving all beings as his own Self, and by that love uniting all in himself as the Lord Himself does.

Misconceptions in the Contemplation of Brahman.

21. There is yet another point in the Sankhya system against which our Lord has protested. The theistic Sankhyas recommend the contemplation of the Ishvara in His pure form as spirit (Purusha) detached from the material world, and some Vedantins hold that the contemplation of the Nirguna or unconditioned Brahman is superior to the contemplation of Brahman as Ishvara, as manifested through the universe and intimately associated with it. As against this view our Lord teaches that the contemplation of Ishvara, the Saguna Brahman, the manifested Lord of the universe, is the safer and more efficacious course for the devotee in all but the very last stage of his spiritual progress when he has fully realised the unity of his Self with the Manifested Ishvara. The Lord accordingly says* that the path of devotion to the Unmanifested is hard to attain for the devotees who have the slightest connection with the body. A single-minded devotion to the Saguna Brahman or manifested Lord is said to be the surest path of progress for all devotees, and our Lord promises† that when resorted to in a single-minded devotion, He will very soon deliver His devotee from the sway of death; that He will give the devotee the necessary knowledge‡ whereby he may enter into the very being of the Lord. This is also the course laid down in the Veda. The Veda no doubt recognises the Nirguna or unconditioned

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* Bh. Gítá XII. 5. † Ibid. XII 6-8. ‡ Ibid. X. 8-10.

aspect of Brahman over and above the conditioned and manifested; but the path of Dharma traced out in the Veda takes the devotee on from the stage of Karma to the stage of Upásana or contemplation of the Saguna aspect of Brahman. When unity with the manifested Lord of the universe has been realised, then, by an easy step the devotee passes on to the realisation of his unity with the Unconditioned. In fact, the aim of the whole Vedic teaching is to enable man to realise his unity with the whole universe by a complete and thorough-going communion with the one Intelligence from whom the universe proceeded, in whom it has its being, and into whom it will return, and of whom it forms the body and expression as it were. This unity cannot indeed be attained by the devotee regarding himself or the Deity as separate from all else in the universe in the way the Sànkhya recommends. Thus, according to our Lord, the devotee cannot rise to a true conception of the unconditioned Brahman unless he has first realised the manifested Lord of the universe and has thereby completely transcended the limitations of human personality.

SECTION IV.

SOCIAL REFORM.

The religious disabilities of caste and sex.

22. These were some of the objectionable features in the religious systems of the day against which our

Lord raised His voice of protest on the ground that they were opposed to the laws of the Sanàtana Dharma. Let us now turn to the attitude of our Lord towards the system of caste as it prevailed in His time and the religious disabilities of lower castes and women which the system involved. He did not evidently approve of the system of religious disabilities to which women and Shúdras and also Vaishyas were then subjected. He would certainly stand aghast at the caste system of the present day, according to which the Kshatriyas and the Vaishyas are classed together and treated alike and the very existence of true Kshatriyas and Vaishyas is denied. After pointing out that the path of devotion to the Supreme Lord is the highest path and that the worship of other Gods as distinct from the Supreme Lord is irregular, our Lord Shrì Krishna has declared that the highest path is open to the most sinful and the meanest born among men, to women, Shùdras and Vaishyas, provided these have resolved to lead a life of righteousness. In His view, even the devotees of the lower classes and those who, having hitherto led a bad life, have just begun to earnestly follow the path of Devotion, should be regarded as Sàdhus, as righteous persons, like the high-born Bràhmanas and Ràjarshis treading the same path.* What a contrast between the broad-minded universal compassion as evidenced by these words of the Lord and the man-made law and custom which has practically excluded the Kshatriyas and

* *Vide* Gìtà, ix, 23-33.

Vaishyas from the Vedic culture, which forbids the utterance of the Vedas in the vicinity of the Shúdras in general, and which prohibits, in the case of even the highest-born woman, the study of scriptures and an independent sacrificial worship of the Divine Being! The reign of this iniquitous law and custom is happily no longer enforced by the Sovereign Power of the land under the Divine Gracious Dispensation which always makes for human progress. Nevertheless, it is only a few, the most enlightened among the Hindus, that have realised the iniquity of this law and custom and the harm it is working in the whole Hindu society; the bulk of the people remaining as apathetic as ever, while a considerable number cling to the existing arrangement, thinking that it has been so ordained by the shâstras, that it is a divinely ordered institution. It is worth while, therefore, to pay special attention to the question and correct the mischievous notions which are responsible for the exclusion of the vast majority of the orthodox Hindus from the sound all-round Vedic system of intellectual and spiritual culture.

The system of religious disabilities of caste and sex is un-vedic.

23. We have seen that according to our Lord the highest path of Devotion is open to women and Shúdras and the meanest-born. How is it then, it may be asked, that they are held unfit for the Vedic system of spiritual culture and for Vedic study,—*i. e.*, for the study of spiritual truths through the

Vedas, the fountain source of all knowledge, and for the study of Vedàngas or sciences ? The shàstras, when properly interpreted, do not seem to endorse the view that woman as such should be excluded from the Vedic study and Vedic system of spiritual culture. My investigation into the Vedic Law of Marriage * has shewn that according to the Vedas woman should be admitted to the Vedic culture as freely as man,—nay she is bound to receive that culture —since man and woman are to be partners in life on equal terms with equal responsibilities and both are expected to be equally well versed in the Vedic Law of spiritual progress. It has also been shewn that the disuse of this Vedic culture which was once general in the case of woman has led to the early and compulsory marriage of girls, consigning her to a life of entire dependence on man. My recent enquiry into the origin of the present system of caste,—which is only a monstrous form of the original rational institution of the *Châturvarnya* or fourfold division of the Âryans, - has led to a similar conclusion in the case of the Shùdras. The results of this investigation will soon appear in the form of a book ; but here I shall refer to the main conclusions so far as they relate to the present subject.

The Vedic account of Chatur-varnya.

24. The Vedas and the Itihásas describe in clear

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* The main results of this investigation has been published in a separate pamphlet, under the title of " *Vedic Law of Marriage or the Emancipation of woman.*"

terms how the four Varnas first came into being. It is said that the people were at first homogeneous, without any sharply defined distinctions except such differences of temperament as may be found within the limits of one and the same class of people or of one and the same family. Before division into the four classes, the people are said to have been all of one Varna, namely, Brâhmanas. The Shástras say that all were created as Brahmanas at first, that these became afterwards divided into the four Varnas by their actions or professions (karma), and that some of these became *Mlechchhas* owing to their utter neglect of spiritual culture. When undivided the people called themselves,—as distinguished from the savage hordes,—'*Varna*' the illumined, '*Arya*' the cultured, and '*Brâhmana*,' the aspirants after the Great One. They had then all one aim, one religion, one mode of worship, and one Veda—called the True Veda as distinguished from its later developments and encrustations which are said to have been due to the ignorance of the one True Veda. This homogeneous people became divided into four classes,—*i e.*, the people who had all been of one Varna (illumined) became divided into four Varnas—according to their respective social functions as priests and teachers, warriors and rulers, agriculturists and merchants, labourers and artisans. This division was necessitated, it is said, by the demands of social efficiency at a time when the simple natural and undisturbed life of the preceding golden age gave place to a complex and artificial life, when

the internal and external foes threatened to disturb the peaceful pursuits of a settled spiritual life. This fourfold division answered the purposes of the society at the time. Though divided in their social functions, all the four classes of people cherished the same spiritual aspirations as before, and were all held equal in spiritual matters. This principle of unity and equality in spiritual matters made them all one people. As one and all of them still aspired to attain Brahman, the Great One, they still called themselves *Brâhmanâs* as distinguished from the *Dasyus*, the unsettled hordes of savage people. As all the people followed the one path of Dharma in one and the same way, they were all Brâhmanas still ; and though, later on, material interests demanded increased attention in life, men of all classes were still regarded as Brâhmanas and called as such on receiving Yâga-Dîkshâ, *i.e.*, on being initiated into the path of Dharma as taught in the Veda, which was open to all classes of people, irrespective of their social functions,—to the Shùdras as well as the higher classes. So, according to the Veda, the Bràhmanas are those who aspire to attain Brahman, the Great One, *i.e.*, to rise above the human limitations; and a man can be truly called a Bráhmana when he is devoted to the path of Dharma, regarding his temporal interests as subservient to the concerns of Dharma. Until and unless people have given prominence to their spiritual interests, they cannot become truly united. On the plane of material interests the people will always be divided, unless the

material interests are held in subordination to the spiritual interests. This is the lesson we are to learn from the teaching of the Veda on the subject.

Formation of Castes.

25. The Itihâsas and Purânas say that in the lapse of time *lobha* or greed for material possessions planted itself in the minds of the people, and that this led them to neglect their spiritual interests. When the material interests loomed large in their eyes and the spiritual interests were given a secondary place, then it was that an element of rivalry and division entered the society. The people as a whole ceased to be called Bráhmans, since that element of unity, namely, spirituality (Brahman, Dharma) was not the dominating factor in life; and they were severally designated Brâhmanas, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas and Shûdras, according to their worldly professions. But even then every man had the liberty of changing his caste by changing the hereditary profession. The Purânas have recorded accounts of individuals and whole families having changed their hereditary professions and having been called after the new professions: Shúdras, Vaishyas and Kshatriyas became Brâhmanas and vice versa. Thus the people, who had been all one when spirituality dominated the minds of the people, became divided into classes and castes named according to their professions when material interests became the predominant factor in life. As spirituality—Dharma—was lost sight of by people in general, they became further

divided and sub-divided according to the professions in all their variety till at last the different classes and castes have come to be regarded as so many distinct species with real or imaginary distinguishing features, some classes being regarded as inherently superior to others by birth, so much so that it is held quite as impossible for an individual of one class to pass into another in this birth as it is impossible for a dog to become a horse.

Fourfold division according to Shri Krishna.

26. Our Lord Shri Krishna does not seem to have been satisfied with this division of people. As against division by birth He has taught * that people may be divided into four broad types according to their natural tendencies as expressed in their outward actions. One man is by temperament inclined to a life of austerity and intellectual pursuits, a second to the life of a warrior, a third to that of a merchant, and a fourth to that of a laborer and servant. All these may tread the path of Devotion by way of dedicating their respective natural faculties to the service of the Lord and thereby attain moral and spiritual perfection. Thus the principle of *Châturvarnya* is that every man in society should be so protected by the society or the Sovereign power that he may be allowed free scope for the full development of his natural faculties and that he may place them at the service of the society as a whole, while reserving a

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* *Vide* Gítà iv. 13, and xviii. 41-49.

minimum of his talents to provide for his own personal wants. Every individual is to work for the benefit of the whole society; and in the economy of society, each kind of service has its own place and is as important as any other when done in perfection. So the Lord has made no distinction among the people of various tendencies so far as the path of Devotion is concerned. Any man may attain perfection in the path of Devotion while working socially along his own line. One of the four types of men is distinctly called Brahmana; and our Lord calls *him* a brahmana in whom purity, self-control, truthfulness, strong faith in Dharma, and spiritual knowledge and wisdom are developed in a marked degree. These are the very virtues whose culture is enjoined by the shàstras * as incumbent on all classes of people following the path of Dharma, and they form the very basis of the Sanatana-Dharma. A shùdra, one who is capable of doing only physical service or born of such parents, when treading the path of Dharma, is bound to develop these brâhmanic virtues; and if he develops them to a marked degree by studious culture, there can be nothing to prevent him from treading the path of Wisdom and being ranked with the bràhmanas and treated as such. On the contrary, if a man born in a family of the brahmanas lacks these virtues and neglects their development, he should be ranked with the lower type and treated as such.† This is the

* *Vide* ante p. 13.

† *Vide* Mahábhárata, Shàntiparva, Adhy. 63, 1-6 verses.

logical outcome of our Lord's teaching on the subject. This is also the verdict given by impartial judges whose discussion and judgment on the true nature and scope of the fourfold Varna is recorded in detail in the Mahabharata. It has been declared * that it is virtue and conduct, but not birth, that go to make a brâhmana. In one place the conclusion is stated in these words :

नविशेषोऽस्ति वर्णानां सर्वं ब्राह्ममिदं जगत् ।
ब्राह्मणाः पूर्वसृष्टा हि कर्मभिर्वर्णतां गताः ॥

> "There is no natural distinction among the several Varnas. The whole world is brahmanic : for, the people who were all created at first Brahmanas, have become the several Varnas in virtue of their occupations."
>
> (*Shântiparva, Adh. 188, 10th verse.*)

This coincides also with the Vedic doctrine stated above,† that all the followers of the Sanàtana Dharma are of one Varna, namely, Brahmanas, no matter what their social functions may be, since these are persons who have developed or are engaged in developing the virtues that go to make a Brahmana.‡

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* यस्तु शूद्रो दमे सत्ये धर्मे च सततोत्थितः ।
तं ब्राह्मणमहं मन्ये वृत्तेन हि भवेद् द्विजः ॥

"When a Shùdra ever abides in self-control, truth and righteousness, him I deem a bráhman. By conduct, verily, one becomes a Dvija (bráhmana)"—Ibid. Vana-Parva 216—14.

† *Vide* ante para 24.

‡ *Vide* ante para 6.

Injustice in the hereditary system of caste.

27. The present system of caste which classifies people according to their birth involves some injustice. Division by birth is no doubt based on the scientific law of heredity, which asserts that the offspring partakes of the nature of the parents. Such a classification would hold good if the people were in all cases really what they are reputed to be,—if among the Brahmanas, Kshatriyas, etc., there be no considerable number whose tendencies are other than brahmanic, warlike, etc , if all marriages since the rigid classification came into vogue have taken place between the people of the same tendencies, if the Hindus have scrupulously followed the natural laws underlying the fourfold division. In point of fact, the conventional classification into the several castes and sub-castes as now obtaining among the Hindus is often, in individual cases, at variance with the natural order of things. It was at any rate felt to be so at the time when the several discussions on the question of caste recorded in the Mahabharata took place; and there is no reason to suppose that since then things have very much altered for the better. So the determining of an individual's capacity and tendency by his or her birth in a particular caste according to the conventional classification often involves injustice. To classify aright an individual and mark out the line of his duty, we should look into his natural tendencies as determined by his conduct in life. When this classification clashes with the conventional classification,

the latter should certainly be set aside; for, the first is based on the test of direct experience while the other is based on inference. Whatever test we may choose to apply in the worldly affairs for purely conventional purposes, the application of the test of direct experience is necessary when one has to guide one's conduct in the light of the Sanatana Dharma. When the natural tendencies lead man one way and the conventional line of duty points to quite a different way, the follower of the Sanatana Dharma would not fulfill the Law if he should follow the conventional line of duty in preference to the lead of the natural tendencies. He would, on the other hand, have to waste much of his energy in adjusting his worldly concerns and would have left little time and energy to attend to the spiritual concerns. It is the prevalence of this kind of injustice incidental to the conventional classification that accounts for the ill performance of the social function in the past ending in social inefficiency. And it accounts also for the disunion among the Hindus as a whole and to the undue pride of caste on the part of those who are intellectually and physically superior. In their pride of caste and ignorance of the true law, these intellectually superior classes have come to spurn their own fellow-countrymen of the other classes as inferior and to regard all foreigners in a body—irrespective of the degree of their moral, intellectual and spiritual culture,--as worse than the lowest class and the outcastes of the Hindus and not fit for social intercourse. Is this attitude shastric? Does it

bespeak spirituality or make for spirituality? It is certainly un-vedic, as I have already shewn. This attitude of the superior classes of the Hindus towards the lower castes and foreigners and the inevitable re-action on the other side have contributed largely to the arrest and retrogression in the moral, material and spiritual progress of the Hindus.

The spiritual exclusiveness of the Brahmana is un-shastric.

28. The advocates of the present hereditary system of caste defend it on the ground that it is based on the interests of spirituality and on the teaching of the shàstras. The shastras which lay stress on this view are the writings known as *Smritis* including metrical Smritis and the Smàrta- or Dharma-Sútras. These compositions only profess to record the laws and customs of their time having mostly to do with social arrangements which form no integral part of the Sanàtana Dharma. If they advocate customs at variance with the Sanàtana Dharma as taught in the Veda, they should be set aside as un-vedic, as the authors of these Smritis themselves declare when they argue against their opponents. However valuable these compositions may be as records of the customs of particular communities at particular periods, they are of no value as against the Vedas and Itihàsas which lay down the laws of Sanatana Dharma and point out the true path of progress whenever the people have gone far out of the way. Viewed in this light, can there be a higher shastra than the Bhaga-

vad-gîta, which embodies the latest teaching of the Supreme Lord of the Universe and the quintessence of the Veda ? Our Lord Shri Krishna would treat all alike and would throw open the path of Devotion, which is the true path of Sanatana Dharma, to all aspirants irrespective of their caste, colour and creed, irrespective of their sex, and irrespective of their past life. Is there a higher and more spiritual life than the life of single-minded devotion to the Supreme Lord, to which our Lord would admit all ? The Vedic rituals of the modern day involving so much cruelty to animals under the name of sacrifice, which the Brahmanas of these days claim as their sole birth-right, and in which there is so much ado about the drinking of Soma,—these rituals are but a poor and distorted version of the symbolic representations of the once purely spiritual communion of the devotee on the path of the Sanatana Dharma with Prajapati, the Lord of the manifested universe. True spirituality consists in an intense, ardent and all-embracing love of God and His creation, in the free giving of what one has, in the realising of unity in spirit where there are seeming distinctions. How can, therefore, one justify, on the ground of spirituality, the all-exclusiveness of the conventional Brahmana of the modern orthodox India ?

SECTION V.

UNITED HUMANITY.

Appeal to the Brahmana.

29. O my Brahmana brother, who oughtest to be the custodian of the spiritual interests of the people, let me draw thy attention to the Sanatana Dharma taught by the Lord and ask thee, as a servant of the Lord and as in duty bound, to teach the truths of the Sanatana Dharma pure and simple to all that seek and to all who promise a return of fair harvest for the seed of spirituality you may sow in them. O my brother, why shouldst thou hesitate to teach the Veda and the truths contained in it freely to all—to non-Brahmanas as well as Brahmanas—who may be prepared to fulfill the true conditions of discipleship? Perhaps thou dost not know the exhortation addressed by Vyasa to the disciples who had been taught the Vedas for propagation among the people at large. He said:

सर्वस्तरतु दुर्गाणि सर्वो भद्राणि पश्यतु ।
श्रावयेच्चतुरो वर्णान् कृत्वा ब्राह्मणमग्रतः ।
वेदस्याध्ययनं हीदं देवकार्यं महत् स्मृतम् ॥

"Let all cross the difficulties, let all realise happpy days. Let the four Varnas learn the Veda through the Brahmana (as teacher). This propagation of Veda is deemed a paramount duty. It is the work of Gods."

(*Shantiparva, Adh. 327, 48-49*).

While these words are yet ringing in thy ears, do thou hasten to qualify thyself for thy Divine Mission of teaching to the world the conditions of true progress, material and spiritual. Do thou, O Brahmana, recognise the dignity of man as such and help every man, the highest and the lowest-born, to see and value it. I exhort thee to do so, remembering the words of Parashara addressed to Janaka in the *Mahábhárata, Shantiparva, Adh. 297, 31-34*:

उपभोगैरपि त्यक्तं नात्मानं सादयेन्नरः ।
चाण्डालत्वेऽपि मानुष्यं सर्वथा तात शोभनम् ॥

इयं हि योनिः प्रथमा यां प्राप्य जगतीपते ।
आत्मा वै शक्यते त्रातुं कर्मभिः शुभलक्षणैः ॥

कथं न विप्रणश्येम योनितोऽस्या इति प्रभो ।
कुर्वन्ति धर्मं मनुजाः श्रुतिप्रामाण्यदर्शनात् ॥

यो दुर्लभतरं प्राप्य मानुष्यं द्विषते नरः ।
धर्मावमन्ता कामात्मा भवेत्स खलु वञ्चयते ॥

"Let no man, however unhappy his lot, despise himself. Man as such, though a Chandala, is a noble creature in every way.

"For, this (humanity) is the first birth and noblest, on passing into which alone, O lord of the earth, can the soul be saved by righteous works.

"Lest they may perish and sink below the humanity, O Lord, men resort to Dharma, as taught in the Veda.

> "That man truly deceiveth himself who, having come to man's estate very hard to attain, heeds it not, and falling a prey to lust, neglects Dharma."

Learn thou, my brâhman brother and teach to the people that true material progress lies along the path of Dharma. Reunite once more all people in the all-embracing love and wisdom of Sanàtana Dharma. Freely admit the equality with thee of thy low-born brother on attaining to the possession of the virtues which thou claimest as thy special mark of distinction. Live thou once more the life of a true Brahmana, expanding thy interests in thy sympathy and love for all, not shutting out all else from thy personal self of atomic insignificance.

Appeal to the non-brahmana.

30. Be thou not disconcerted, my non-brâhman brother, if thou art insulted by a (conventional) Brahmana in his pride of caste. Look thou straight to the virtues which make a true brâhmana, and without cavil do thou honor them who may possess those virtues in a marked degree. Do thou try and develope those virtues in thyself and thereby raise thyself to the level of the true brâhmana, to which thou hast equal access with thy proud bràhman brother. Please remember that it is not the social privileges attached by human convention to the position of a brahmana that constitute true brâhmanhood; it is the virtues of the soul forming the basis of the Sanàtana

Dharma which make a brâhmana. It is the possession of these virtues that entitles the true Brahmana to the privileges associated with his duty of spiritual ministration to the people. The Brahmana who lacks them cannot claim the privileges, and the society is right when it refuses to honor him as a Brahmana. Please remember also that thou, no less than the conventional brahmana, hast fallen from the high pedestal of the once universal true spiritual brahmanhood of the Sanatana Dharma, in thy greed for material possession which has made thee refuse to serve the society as a whole with thy talents, as it has made the brahmana unwilling to communicate freely to others the spiritual truths he has learnt. Both of you, the brahman and the non-brahman, have fallen from your original lofty spiritual height, though all may not have fallen to the same depths. Both of you must try and rise. Do thou remember also the basic laws of the *Chaturvarnya*, the fourfold division of Varnas, which demand the devotion of all thy talents to the best interests of the whole society first, and then only to thine own personal interests. Take delight in doing thy best and utmost unselfishly for the society as a servant of the Lord, reserving only a minimum of the opportunity for thy personal self. This is the law of the Sanatana Dharma, and it is a recognition of this law which will unite all the Hindus together and will unite the whole humanity, the whole progeny of Manu, in one family. Let no selfish regard for material interests stand in the way of the

unification of all peoples on earth. These are destined one day to be united in one bond of human brotherhood; who else then but the Hindus, the all-tolerant true followers of the Sanatana Dharma, can be expected to take the first steps on the path leading to this consummation?

Appeal to the Hindus in general.

31. Make no invidious distinction, my countrymen, between one Hindu and another. Spurn not as aliens the Jains and the Buddhists, the Parsis and the Jews, the Mahometans and the Christians. Prove to them all the true value of the Sanatana Dharma by living it. Do ye revise the existing caste system, by changing your present attitude, on the original principle of the Chaturvarnya-Dharma and making that principle a living factor in your lives. Thus reformed and properly understood, the system may even be found applicable to the Western Society and may go far to solve many a social problem that are exercising the minds of the western world now in the height of material civilization. Readily do ye exchange your valuable spiritual truths for many an equally valuable lesson you have already learned and have yet to learn from the west. Have ye not yet learned to see that the English people have come to rule us under a Divine Dispensation? Dost thou, my Hindu brother, not yet realise that after a long interval it is the British dominion that has united the whole country under one rule and

established peace in the land? Dost thou not see that, but for its advent, the custom of forced suttee and oppression of lower castes and out-castes in the name of law would have beeo things of the past? Dost thou not see that but for our contact with the western civilization we could never have realised how much in our pride and brute power of sex we have degraded our women from their once very high status, how ill we have treated the lower castes, and how far these sins have led to our degeneration as a race and have contributed to our downfall?. Dost thou not see that the very presence of the Europeans living amidst us is an object-lesson teaching us what those various virtues are which have gone far to make them successful rulers and builders of mighty empires in the world? Is it, then, too much to ask you, my brethren, to regard our English rulers with love and fraternal feeling, forgiving them if they ever go wrong or seem to go wrong, as we often need their forgiveness when in our ignorance of their true motives we take some uncharitable view of their doings? Know that we Hindus and Europeans are really brothers, belonging to the same stock of people, the Aryan race, and that we two people, the Aryans of the west and the Aryans of the east, have been brought together by a Divine Dispensation, whether it be for a complete amalgamation or for mere mutual benefit by way of exchanging the valuable life-lessons we have respectively learnt during the long period of our separation. Why, then, I ask in the name of truth, should we, the

two people, not work in unison to bring about a happy combination of the two ideals? What prevents you, my countrymen, from joining hands with the western Aryans and extending to them the arms of spiritual love to enfold them in the Aryan Brotherhood? Who are these people from the west, whom you call Yavanas, Mlechchhas, Hûnas, and so on? They are not alien to us, no strangers. In the name of Manu, the Sage Bhrigu has told * us that they are none other than the descendants of the bands of warriors who went to distant lands in quest of conquest, and who, having settled there, lost touch with the Brahmans of the mother-country and the truths of the Sanatana Dharma. It may be that you are not aware of the words † of wisdom and love which the Maha-Vishnu, the Supreme Lord of the universe, is said to have addressed to the emperor Mandhata as regards the treatment of the people who had lost touch with the Sanatana Dharma and were called Mlechchhas, Kiratas, and so on. The Divine Being exhorted the emperor to re-establish the Chaturvarnya Dharma, the system of fourfold division of the people, among those people then called collectively Dasyus, and teach them the path of the Sanatana Dharma. Thus, according to the Divine Being, brotherhood in the Sanatana Dharma and the Chaturvarnya Dharma may be extended to all people, even to those who have hitherto re-

* *Vide* Manu X. 43-45; and Mahábhárata Shàntiparva, Adhy. 188-17, 18.

† Ibid. Adhyaya 65.

mained outside the pale of the Sanatana Dharma. The Sanatana Dharma and the true Chaturvarnya Dharma are divinely ordered institutions making for the true progress of the humanity. May we not therefore hope that this close contact of the Aryans of the East and the Aryans of the West has been designed by the Supreme Lord for a re-establishment of the true Chaturvarnya Dharma among them all, seeing that thereby most of the troubles due to the present social arrangements of the materially civilized West and existing in some wealthy nations in a most accentuated form may be put an end to? This may not seem an impossible dream if we bear in mind with what avidity and earnestness the Vedanta and Theosophy have been welcomed and availed of by the advanced West. Let us, therefore, the Aryans of the East and the Aryans of the West, peacefully exchange the lessons which each people have to teach to the other, like the true brothers we are, and gladly accept, nay welcome, the present situation as a Divinely ordered one tending to an all-round progress of both. I beg of you, my countrymen, especially the educated Hindus and the brahmanas who are the divinely appointed custodians of the Sanatana Dharma, and whose sympathy and love ought to know no limit whatever,—I beg of you not only not to stand in the way of this consummation, but to actively help to bring it about. May the Devas and the Rishis, the Gods and the Sages, who are the living Guardians of the Humanity, inspire the true Brahmanas

and Kshatriyas of the world, whether they be in the East or in the West, who are the natural leaders of the humanity and who ought to rise above ordinary human limitations and prejudices,—may the Gods and the Sages inspire them to make a grand effort to put an end to the present tension of feeling, to inaugurate a new era of peace and progress, and to bring about once more the golden age of Satya-Yuga, which, though having once passed away with the race of Brahma-Rishis and Raja-Rishis, has not passed away for good and is bound to recur again and again as new races of Brahma-Rishis and Raja-Rishis come into being! Amen! Om!! Tat-Sat!!!

APPENDIX.

AUTHORITIES FOR THE NEW THEORY OF CASTE.

Some of the texts on which the statements contained in paras 24 and 25 are based are hereunder subjoined.

(i) At first all were brahamans, the Devout.

असृजद्ब्राह्मणानेव पूर्वं ब्रह्मा प्रजापतीन् ।
आत्मतेजोऽभिनिर्वृत्तान् भास्कराग्निसमप्रभान् ॥

ततः सत्यं च धर्मं च तपो ब्रह्म च शाश्वतम् ।
आचारं चैव शौचं च सर्गादौ विदधे प्रभुः ॥

The *Brahmanas alone* at first did Brahma create, those Prajapatis who were perfect in their own glory, equal in splendour to the sun and fire. Then Truth and Dharma, Tapas and the eternal Veda, righteousness and purity, in the beginning of the creation did the Lord create.—(*Shântiparva*, 188, 1-2.)

यथा कृतयुगे पूर्वमेकवर्णमभूत्किल ।
तथा कलियुगस्यान्ते शूद्रीभूताः प्रजास्तथा ॥

As in the Krita Yuga at first there was indeed *one Varna*, so at the end of the Kali Yuga, the people become Shudras.—(*Matsya-Purâna*, 144-78.)

(ii) Then Brahmanas and Dasyus, the Devout and the Undevout.

यो विश्वस्य जगतः प्राणतस्पतिर्यो ब्रह्मणे प्रथमो गा अविन्दत् ।
इन्द्रो यो दस्यूँ॑रधराँ॑ अवातिरन्मरुत्वन्तं सख्याय हवामहे ॥

Indra who is the Lord of all that moves and breathes, who first found the cows for the *Brâhmanas*, who hurled down the *Dasyus*, Him girt by Maruts we invoke to be our friend.—(*Rig-Veda. I. 101,5.*)

त्वं हि शूरः सनिता चोदयो मनुषो रथम् ।
सहावान् दस्युमव्रतमोषः पात्रं न शोचिषा ॥

Thou, a hero, a benefactor, hast impelled the chariot of the *Devotee*; victorious thou hast burnt up *the undevout Dasyu*, as a vessel is consumed by a blaze.—(*Rig-Veda. I. 175,3.*)

ससानात्याँ॑ उत सूर्यं ससानेन्द्रः ससान पुरुभोजसं गाम् ।
हिरण्ययमुत भोगं ससान हत्वी दस्यून् प्रार्यं वर्णमावत् ॥

Indra bestowed horses, He bestowed the sun, He bestowed the many-nourishing cow, He bestowed golden wealth; having slain the *Dasyus*, He protected the *Arya*, the *Varna*.—(*Rig-Veda. III. 34-9.*)

(iii) The one Brahmana Varna became four Varnas for social efficiency.

ब्रह्म वा इदमग्र आसीदेकमेव । तदेकं सन्न व्यभवत् । तच्छ्रेयोरूपमत्यसृजत क्षत्रम् । . . . सैषा क्षत्रस्य योनिर्यद्ब्रह्म । तस्माद्यद्यपि राजा परमतां गच्छति ब्रह्मैवान्तत उप निश्रयति स्वां योनिम् ॥ . . . स नैव व्यभवत् स विशमसृजत । . . . स नैव व्यभवत् स शौद्रं वर्णमसृजत ॥

(Of) the Brähmanic type, in truth, this (humanity) in the beginning was, one only. Being one, it did not

develope. It evolved an excellent specimen (of humanity), namely, the warrior (Kshattra). . . . This, the *Brahmana*, is the *source* of the *Kshattra*. So, though the ruler has attained excellence, he resorts to bràhmanhood, the source of his being ...He did not develope; he evolved the *Vaishya*....He did not develope and he evolved the *Shudra Varna*.

Brihadaranyaka i, 4-11.

(iv) The four Varnas were equal in spiritual matters.

यज्ञनिष्पत्तये सर्वमेतद्ब्रह्मा चकार वै । चातुर्वर्ण्यं महाभाग यज्ञसाधनमुत्तमम् ॥ यज्ञैराप्यायिता देवा वृष्ट्युत्सर्गेण ताः प्रजाः । आप्याययन्ते धर्मज्ञ यज्ञाः कल्याणहेतवः ॥ निष्पाद्यन्ते नरैस्तैस्तु स्वधर्माभिरतैस्सदा । विशुद्धाचरणोपेतैस्सद्भिस्सन्मार्गगामिभिः ॥ स्वर्गापवर्गौ मानुष्यात्प्राप्नुवन्ति महामुने । यथाऽभिरुचितं स्थानं तद्यान्ति मनुजा द्विज ॥ प्रजास्ता ब्रह्मणा सृष्टाश्चातुर्वर्ण्यव्यवस्थिताः । सम्यक्छ्रद्धासमाचारप्रवणा मुनिसत्तम ॥ यथेच्छावासनिरतास्सर्वबाधाविवर्जिताः । शुद्धान्तःकरणाश्शुद्धास्सर्वानुष्ठाननिर्मलाः ॥ शुद्धे च तासां मनसि शुद्धेऽन्तस्संस्थिते हरौ । शुद्धज्ञानं प्रपश्यन्ति विष्ण्वाख्यं येन तत्पदम् ॥

Brahmà formed this *Chàturvarnya* (the fourfold institution of people) for the accomplishment of Yajna; it is most conducive to Yajna. Nourished by Yajnas, the Devas nourish mankind by discharging rain. Yajnas, the causes of prosperity, were constantly performed by the people, always righteous and devoted to their respective duties, pure in their deeds, walking in the right path. Men departing from the world of men, went to Svarga and Moksha or to whatever place they liked. These people, created by Brahmà, and divided into four Varnas, were strongly inclined to faith and righteousness, dwelling where they liked, free from all sufferings, pure in heart, themselves

pure, and spotless in all observances. Their mind becoming pure, Hari dwelt within in all His purity; and then they saw the Pure Knowledge, that Goal which is called Vishnu.—(*Vishnu Purâna, I, vi, 7-13.*)

ब्राह्मणाः क्षत्रिया वैश्याः शूद्राश्च कृतलक्षणाः । कृते युगे समभवन् स्वकर्मनिरताः प्रजाः ॥ समाश्रयं समाचारं समज्ञानं च केवलम् । तदा हि समकर्माणो वर्णा धर्मानवाप्नुवन् ॥ एकदेवसदायुक्ता एकमन्त्रविधिक्रियाः । पृथग्धर्मास्त्वैकवेदा धर्ममेकमनुव्रताः ॥ चातुराश्रम्ययुक्तेन कर्मणा कालयोगिना । अकामफलसंयोगात् प्राप्नुवन्ति परां गतिम् ॥ आत्मयोगसमायुक्तो धर्मोऽयं कृतलक्षणः॥

Brahmanas, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas, and Shudras were perfect in Krita-Yuga, the people being devoted to their respective works. They were quite alike in the object of their trust, in their observances and in their knowledge. At that period the Varnas, alike in their rites, resorted to the Dharmas. They were unceasingly devoted all to one Deity, and used one mantra, one mode, and one ritual. Though they had different duties, they all followed one Veda, and one Dharma. By works done in time according to the four Ashramas, by dissociation from the fruits, they attained the Supreme Goal. Dharma, thus associated with communion with the Atman, is the mark of the Krita-Yuga.—(*Vana-Parva, Adhy.,* 149, *verses* 18-23.)

(v) Many Vedas in the place of the one True Veda.

एकवेदस्य चाज्ञानात् वेदास्ते बहवः कृताः ।
सत्त्वस्य चेह विभ्रंशात् सत्ये कश्चिदवस्थितः ॥

And now (in the Dvapara-Yuga), owing to ignorance of the one Veda, Vedas were multiplied; from the decline of goodness, few only adhered to truth.

(*Ibid. verse* 30.)

(vi) Yaga-Diksha confers the status of a brahmana.

अथयद्ब्राह्मण इत्याह । अनद्धेव वा अस्यातः पूरा जातं भवति। इदं ह्याहुः रक्षांसि योषितमनु सचन्ते । तदुत रक्षांस्येव रेत आदधातीति । अथात्राद्धा जायते यो ब्रह्मणो यो यज्ञाज्जायते । तस्मादपि राजन्यं वा वैश्यं वा ब्राह्मण इत्येव ब्रूयात् । ब्राह्मणो हि जायते यो यज्ञाज्जायते ॥

Now as regards what he says, 'this Brahmana has been consecrated.' Before this his birth is uncertain. For they say that Rakshasas follow after women and that it is Rakshasas who inject seed into them. So then he is certainly born (a brahmana) who is born from Brahman (sacred science, Veda), who is born from Yajna. Wherefore also let him address a Rajanya (Kshatriya) or a Vaishya as Bràhmana, for he is born a Brahmana, who is born from Yajna.

(*Shatapatha Brahmana III. 2-1-40.*)

स ह दीक्षमाण एव ब्राह्मणतामभ्युपैति ।

He (the Kshatriya), when consecrated, attains Brahmanhood.—(*Aitareya-Brahmana VII. 23.*)

(vii) The Shudras were entitled to Soma-Yaga.

शूद्रः पैजवनो नाम सहस्राणां शतं ददौ ।
ऐन्द्राग्नेन विधानेन दक्षिणामिति नः श्रुतम् ॥

The Shruti tells us that the shudra, named Paijavana, made a gift of one hundred thousand (cows) in the Aindragna ceremony. [This ceremony is preliminary to Soma-Yaga in the case of one whose ancestors for three generations have not drunk Soma.]

(*Shanti-Parva, Adhy. 60, 39th verse.*)

(viii) Greed and sin divided men into classes and castes.

ततः कालात्मको योऽसौ तस्यांशः कथितो हरेः । स पातयत्यघं घोरमल्पमल्पाल्पसारवत् ॥ अधर्मबीजमुद्भूतं तमोलोभसमुद्भवम् । प्रजासु तासु मैत्रेय रागादिकमसाधकम् ॥

Then Time, described as the portion of Hari, infused (into men) direful sin, which affords small happiness. This which is the seed of unrighteousness, the source of darkness and greed, sprang forth in men, giving birth to attachment, and making all effort futile.

(Vishnu-Purâna I. vi. 14-15.)

तेषां तु कालसृष्टोऽसौ पापबिन्दुर्महामते । चेतस्सु ववृधे चक्रुस्तेन यज्ञे न मानसम् ॥ वेदान्वेद्यं तथा देवान्यज्ञकर्माधिकं च यत् । तत्सर्वं निन्दमानास्ते यज्ञव्यासेधकारिणः ॥ प्रवृत्तिमार्गव्युच्छित्तिकारिणो वेदनिन्दकाः । दुरात्मानो दुराचारा बभूवुः कुटिलाशयाः ॥ संसिद्धायां तु वार्तायां प्रजास्सृष्ट्वा प्रजापतिः । मर्यादां स्थापयामास यथास्थानं यथागुणम् ॥ वर्णानामाश्रमाणां च धर्मान् धर्मभृतां वर । लोकांश्च सर्ववर्णानां सम्यग्धर्मानुपालिनाम् ॥

But that drop of sin which had been created by Time increased in men's hearts and they disregarded Yajna. Reviling the Vedas and the prescriptions of the Vedas, the Gods and all sacrificial rites, etc., obstructing Yajnas, and cutting the Path of Pravritti, they became malignant, vicious, and perverse in their designs. The means of subsistence being provided, Prajâpati, having created people, established an orderly distinction among them, according to their status and their tendencies. He fixed the duties of the castes and orders and the worlds to be attained by all the castes who perfectly fulfilled their duties.

(Ibid, I, vi, 29-33.)

(ix) Spirituality makes Brahmanas, and worldly occupations make classes.

सर्वे वर्णा ब्राह्मणा ब्रह्मजाश्च सर्वे नित्यं व्याहरन्ते च ब्रह्म ।
तत्त्वं शास्त्रं ब्रह्मबुद्ध्या ब्रवीमि सर्वं विश्वं ब्रह्म चैतत् समस्तम् ॥

All Varnas are Brâhmanas and are born such from Brahman (Veda, Dharma). Every Varna always studies Brahman. In the light of the Veda I tell thee the truth revealed: the whole universe and all this we see is Brahman.—(*Shântiparva*. 318, 89)

न विशेषोऽस्ति वर्णानां सर्वं ब्राह्ममिदं जगत् । ब्राह्मणाः पूर्वसृष्टा हि कर्मभिर्वर्णतां गताः ॥ कामभोगप्रियास्तीक्ष्णाः क्रोधनाः प्रियसाहसाः । त्यक्तस्वधर्मा रक्ताङ्गास्ते द्विजाः क्षत्रतां गताः ॥ गोभ्यो वृत्तिं समास्थाय पीताः कृष्युपजीविनः । स्वधर्मान् नानुतिष्ठन्ति ते द्विजा वैश्यतां गताः ॥ हिंसाऽनृतप्रिया लुब्धाः सर्वकर्मोपजीविनः । कृष्णाः शौचपरिभ्रष्टाः ते द्विजाः शूद्रतां गताः ॥

There is no natural distinction among the Varnas. The whole world is Brâhmanic; for the people who were all created at first as Brâhmanas have become the several Varnas in virtue of their occupations. Those brâhmanas who were fond of sensual pleasure, fiery, irascible, prone to violence, who had forsaken their Dharma and were red-limbed, became Kshatriyas. Those bràhmanas who derived their livelihood from kine, who were yellow, who subsisted by agriculture, and who neglected their Dharma, became Vaishyas. Those bràhmanas who were addicted to mischief and falsehood, who were covetous, who lived by all kinds of work, who were black and had fallen from purity, became Shúdras.

(*Shantiparva Adhyaya* 188, *verses* 10–13.)

(x) The Veda, Dharma and Yajna are open to all.

इत्येतैः कर्मभिर्व्यस्ता द्विजा वर्णान्तरं गताः। धर्मो यज्ञक्रिया वैषां नित्य न प्रतिषिध्यते ॥ वर्णाश्चत्वार एते हि येषां ब्राह्मी सरस्वती। विहिता ब्राह्मणाः पूर्वं लोभात्त्वज्ञानतां गताः ॥ ब्राह्मणा ब्रह्मतन्त्रस्थास्तपस्तेषां न नश्यति। ब्रह्म धारयतां नित्यं व्रतानि नियमांस्तथा ॥

Separated from each other by works like these, the bráhmanas became divided into different Varnas. Neither Dharma nor the observance of Sacrificial rites is always forbidden to any of them. For, these are the four Varnas for whom the Divine word (Veda) is prescribed. Bráhmanas at first, owing to greed they have sunk into ignorance. Brâhmanas are those who are devoted to the Vedic cult. The devotion of these, who hold fast to the Veda, to its vows and observances, never wanes.—(*Ibid.* 14—16.)

(xi) Brahmanas become Mlechchhas by loss of spirituality.

ब्रह्म चैतत् पुरा सृष्टं ये तु जानन्ति न द्विजाः। तेषां बहुविधास्त्वन्यास्तत्रतत्र द्विजातयः ॥ पिशाचा राक्षसाः प्रेता विविधा म्लेच्छजातयः। प्रणष्टज्ञानविज्ञानाः स्वच्छन्दाहारचेष्टिताः ॥

Those bráhmanas who know not this Veda given out at first,—of such bràhmanas there are many classes here and there, named Pishachas, Rakshasas, Pretas and the various Mlechchha tribes, who have lost their spiritual knowledge and spiritual realisation, eating and acting as they like.—(*Ibid* 17—18.)